

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH SERVICES

Pediculosis (Lice) Management Guidelines

Recent research by the Harvard School of Public Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics* advises a change in screening procedures, exclusion and 'No Nit' policies in schools. There is no scientific evidence that warrants the exclusion of children with head lice. Periodic head checks by parents, resulting in early detection, treatment and removal of live lice and nits, is the most reliable method for controlling pediculosis.

Nurse's Role

The school nurse is available to educate parents, teachers and children regarding the detection and treatment of head lice. The nurse will notify families when a case of head lice has occurred in their child's class. No child will be identified. The nurse will monitor the treatment of an affected child to insure that appropriate and timely treatment has occurred.

Procedure

- 1) Children with an active lice infestation will be sent home by the end of the day for treatment before they return to school the next day. They must be checked before reentry by the nurse/designee to ensure that treatment/lice removal has occurred.
- 2) When a child with untreated head lice is reported to the nurse by a parent, or detected at school, a note requesting that parents check their child's head will be sent home to each member of the class. No mass screenings will be done at school.
- 3) Each parent/guardian of each child in the class must check their child before they return to school the next day to make sure their child is free from lice and nits (eggs). If your child has head lice, treat your child with a pediculocidal shampoo, notify the nurse and bring your child to the nurse for reentry clearance. All live lice and most nits should be removed before your child returns to school. The nurse may deny reentry to a child who has not been treated.
- 4) The nurse may follow -up with periodic checks of individual children who had lice to make sure they have not been reinfested. A nit takes up to 2 weeks to hatch and a louse takes approximately 2 weeks to become an adult egg layer, one month of biweekly head checks is recommended for families who have a case of head lice and at least weekly checks are strongly suggested for all other families.

Please check your children carefully and often. Report findings to your school nurse.

*Sciscione, P. (2007). No Nit Policies in Schools: Time for a Change. *Journal of School Nursing*, 23(1) 13-20.

